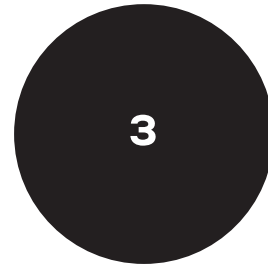




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## **View. Theories and Practices of Visual Culture.**

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## **Archiving States of Exception**

Discussions about "states of exception" usually center around their political, legal, and historical aspects. In the third issue of "View," we approach the subject from a slightly different perspective, concentrating on the question of what kind of visual experience emerges in moments of radical social crisis. We ask: what kind of archive is imposed by a political regime that suspends democratic procedures of government, and what are the modes of its production and perception? What kind of practices of resistance can appear under such conditions? Images from archives of states of exception are characterized by a tension between the structural frame forced upon them by institutional regimes and their own internal dynamics. Such tension means that there is no general rule that would define once and for all the actions and modes of circulation of these images, as each time, the frame is provided by someone else. It is already in the very juxtaposition of general rule and individual act that the necessity for a critical analysis of the visual organization of the state of exception emerges—an analysis that would be able to define the dynamic governing these images.

This is the task that we set before the authors of the third issue of "View." **Close-up** concentrates on "archives of states of exception" conceived in the broadest possible way – the same manner that we treat the category of the state of exception itself. By analysing the state of exception from the perspective of its visual production, and examining the visual effects of resistance against its organisation, we begin, not with political and legal definitions, but with the images themselves, and with the external and internal conditions they reveal. Moreover, we are interested predominantly in the historical dimension of these archives; in the way the tensions become visible and legible after some time. This is why a crucial part of the issue is dedicated to essays on films, which—through the use of archival material—attempt to narrate the fate of the image in conditions of political crisis. Iwona Kurz analyses Hartmut Bitomsky's *Deutschlandbilder*, a film presenting narrative forms and models of Nazi documentary cinematic production; Justyna Lipko-Konieczna offers an interpretation of a propagandist film from the period of martial law in Poland, entitled *So That Our House Doesn't Burn*, directed by Marian Duszyński; Paweł Mościcki devotes his essay to Patricio Guzman's *Nostalgia for the Light* (*Nostalgia*

*de la Luz*), a meditation on stargazing during Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile; Tomasz Szerszeń discusses the oeuvre of Angela Ricci-Lucchi and Yervant Gianikian, especially their *Prisoners of War (Prigionieri della guerra)*, based on film footage from the First World War. The theme of the Great War returns in Dorota Sajewska's essay on the tension between techniques of montage and reconstruction in the context of Jean-François Delassus' documentary *14-18. The Noise and the Fury (14-18, le bruit et la fureur)*. Georges Didi-Huberman, whose essay has its international premiere in this issue of "View," reflects on the ways that the image—including the cinematic image—is able to grasp an approaching catastrophe, invisible as methane gas in mines. A similar theme is explored by Monika Pastuszko in her analysis of irradiated reportage photographs taken in Chernobyl right after the nuclear plant disaster at Rassorva. Last but not least, W.J.T Mitchell, in an article initially published in *Critical Inquiry* last year, discusses the visual production of the Occupy movement and its historical contexts.

**Panorama** comprises a series of monographic essays on particular artists. We present the Polish translation of Giorgio Agamben's essay on films by Guy Debord. Katarzyna Bojarska writes about Andrzej Wróblewski's war paintings, Agata Pietrasik on Henryk Berlewi's avant-gardism(s), and Aleksandra Ubertowska on Rachel Whiteread's Viennese monument for the murdered Austrian Jews. This constellation is crowned with an excerpt of the Polish translation of Susan Buck-Morss's book, *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History*, soon to be published by Krytyka Polityczna.

In **Perspectives**, one finds a posthumous conversation with the exceptional photographer and theorist Allan Sekula, and a Polish translation of the obituary Terry Smith wrote for him. These are accompanied here by a transcript of a public discussion with Piotr Piotrowski on the meanderings of his career as an art historian, critic and curator, and a polemical exchange about Łukasz Zaremba's essay in the previous issue of "View." **Snapshots** is devoted to critical readings of two books on film history in Poland and Germany (*Der Polnische Film*, edited by Konrad Klejsa, Schamma Schahadat and Margarete Wach; Tadeusz Lubelski's *Historia niebyła kina PRL*) and of Jonathan Crary's most recent *24/7. Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*. **Viewpoint** presents two quite exceptional

projects where images—gathered and ordered visual materials documenting both social and individual states of exception—are used for cognitive purposes. The first is the presentation of a part of Paweł Szypulski's collection of postcards sent from the Museum KL Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oświęcim; the second offers a glimpse of Georges Didi-Huberman's exhibition at Le Fresnoy on images of lamentation. The first is framed by Iwona Kurz's commentary, the second by that of Régis Durand.

**The Editorial Team**